

Arts Council Collection

Acquisitions

2014–15

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George Barber

George Barber's low-tech 'cut up' video works, which helped define the 'slacker' aesthetic of the early 1990s, make use of found footage from news reports, adverts and music videos.

The short film *Arts Council GB Scratch* samples a number of different people – from politicians, TV presenters and artists – pronouncing on the visual arts. While some of the people in the film are familiar – most notably David Hockney and Bridget Riley – others seem to have been pulled from, or have since fallen into, obscurity. During the film abstract sculptural work by artists such as Carl Andre and Anthony Caro are juxtaposed with animated geometric shapes borrowed from the visual language of contemporary video games.



Arts Council GB Scratch, 1988
SD video (video tape transferred to QuickTime file)
1 minute 34 seconds
Edition 1 of 3 + 1AP

Michael Dean

Communication (and its failures) lies at the heart of Michael Dean's work. 'All my work takes words for objects, takes objects for words,' he has said. His cast concrete sculptures form letters from his private, cuneiform-like typography, while tongues – the muscular organ of speech – appear in all shapes, colours and sizes.

As is the case with *now (Working Title), then (Working Title) Analogue Series (muscles)*, the titles of Dean's works are often wordy and repetitive. Awkward to read or to say out loud, they ask the viewer to do the work, raising questions about naming, or the nature of a 'finished' artwork.

Writing is an essential part of Dean's work. This sculpture – one of a series – began as a minimal letter-form invented by the artist, translated into a mould from which the concrete sculpture was cast. Although concrete is a tough and robust material, Dean's works are surprisingly delicate, fragile and human.



now (Working Title), then (Working Title) Analogue Series (muscles), 2014
Concrete (black)
240 × 40 × 35 cm

Tom Godfrey

Keep Floors and Passages Clear is the culmination of a project curated by the artist and curator Tom Godfrey. Running from November 2008 to March 2011, the project was a response to a poster produced by the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA), which Godfrey first encountered in the foyer of the Nottingham arts venue One Thoresby Street. The RoSPA poster featured an illustration of a man tripping over a pile of boxes, under which were the words 'Keep Floors and Passages Clear'.

Godfrey invited a number of artists to produce a single A1 piece of artwork, which were then mounted in an identical manner to poster and displayed next to it at One Thoresby Street. Each time a piece of work was replaced it would become part of a portfolio of work that could be viewed on request at One Thoresby Street.

Artists: Yelena Popova, Richard Paul, Dan Rees, James Smith, Ruairiadh O'Connell, Scott King, Paul Housely, Martijn in't Veld, Brian Kennon, Vanessa Billy, Andreas 'Sorry' Steffen, Lance Wakeling, Giles Round, gerlach en koop, Mathew Sawyer, Marlie Mul, Nicolas Deshayes, Mick Peter, Tessa Lynch, Scott Myles

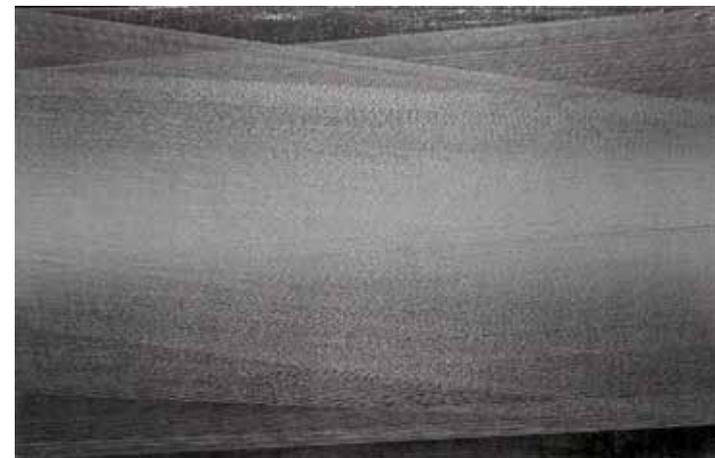
Keep Floors and Passages Clear, curated by Tom Godfrey, 2008–2011
Original RoSPA safety poster within aluminium snap-frame and wall mounted poster rack containing 20 works on paper by 20 individual artists. Mediums include c-type print, pen, acrylic paint, gloss paint, collage and screen print
Dimensions variable



Mary Griffiths

Mary Griffiths's evocative, large-scale drawings are formed of thousands of fine lines inscribed into surfaces layered with graphite. Each line is scratched into the work's surface with a small hand-held tool, taking a long time to complete. The mirrored effect created by Griffiths's many layers of graphite, and the fine lines inscribed into them, recalls a different, outdated, mode of artistic production: the tarnished silver of a daguerreotype.

Griffiths is interested in the relationship between a two dimensional drawing and three dimensional space, and the ways in which a drawing might be seen as an object. These particular drawings contain depth and movement: when approached by the viewer their fine lines dance and shift and animate the otherwise static surface of the works.



Causeway, 2013
Graphite with inscribed line on linoleum on woodblock
36 × 54.5 × 5 cm

Microlight, 2014
Graphite with inscribed line on gesso board
Two panels 18.9 × 52.1 × 2 cm and 18.7 × 52.1 × 2 cm

Anthea Hamilton

Anthea Hamilton's work often brings together seemingly opposing concepts. *Venice Kimono*, developed for the artist's solo exhibition at Firstsite, Colchester in 2012, is the culmination of Hamilton's research into Venetian architecture, 1970s disco and Japanese Kabuki theatre. Of Kabuki theatre, Hamilton has said: 'It was the most arresting visual experience that I could think of, simultaneously decorative and pragmatic'.

Leg Chair (Jane Birkin), one of a series of 10 chairs that the artist began in 2009, is formed of a simple stand and seat flanked by suggestively splayed Perspex legs. Tucked between the layers of Perspex, and into the top of a pair of knee-high socks, are images of the English actress Jane Birkin. Of her frequent use of pop-culture images – such as these images of Birkin, or photographs of John Travolta, whose face adorns the back of the *Venice Kimono* – Hamilton has said: 'Images complicate by their simple appearance: it is quotation, reference, collage, homage all in one'.

Leg Chair (Jane Birkin), 2011

Acrylic, brass, photographic reproductions, 7" single cover, nylon stockings and wax
81 × 92 × 46 cm

Venice Kimono, 2012

Digital print on silk viscose satin, cotton, cotton rope, brushed steel, string and wood
300 × 300 × 44 cm



Andy Holden

Andy Holden is an artist and musician who produces sculpture, films, paintings and performances. Dealing with childhood memories and attachment to objects, his work often explores the relationship between irony and sincerity. In 2013 Holden resurrected the artistic movement 'Maximum Irony! Maximum Sincerity' (MI!MS), which was first established by the artist and his friends as teenagers growing up in Bedfordshire.

The sculpture *Totem for Thingly Time (5)* has been described by the artist as 'part cake, part stalagmite, part pastel hangover'. Formed of dripping plaster, Holden explains that this work was an attempt to make an object that 'revealed the time of its own construction'. He sees it as 'something heavy, ambiguous, fallen out of the cartoon landscape, but related to place in the same way that a bird's nest is'.

Totem for Thingly Time (5), 2014–2015
Finishing plaster and house hold emulsion paint
100 × 150 × 60cm



Stewart Home

Stewart Home is an artist, filmmaker, writer and activist. To create the series *Becoming (M)other*, a collaborative work with Chris Dorley-Brown, Home imitated poses thrown by his mother, Julia Callan-Thompson, during a modelling shoot in the 1960s. Photographs of the artist in these poses were integrated with the original images to create a series of joint portraits.

The Eclipse & Re-emergence of the Oedipus Complex also focuses on the artist's mother. Images of Callan-Thompson working as a fashion model and club hostess are combined with a spoken commentary to explore the limits of documentary filmmaking, and to create a work which Home describes as 'simultaneously an expression of love and loss'.



Becoming (M)other, 2004
Gillée print
8 prints plus text panel, each 62.2 × 51.7 cm
Edition 3 of 5

The Eclipse and Re-Emergence of the Oedipus Complex, 2004
Digital video
41 minutes
Gift of the artist 2014

Helen Marten

A sculptor who continually shifts between two- and three-dimensional modes, Helen Marten makes videos and wall-based works and free-standing sculptures. Speaking about her sculptural assemblages, Marten describes her approach as 'getting to the peripheries of a place – to somewhere on the edges – where things can't quite be named with certainty.' She goes on to say: 'what I'm aiming at is the triggering of an avalanche of overlaps, a piling-up of absurdities.'

Bluebutter Idles resembles a 'dumpster, trough or cradle'. Its deceptively familiar form is a repository for an elaborate sculptural tableau, in which organic and inorganic items form an oblique 'archaeological anagram'. Marten is interested in the point at which diagrammatic clarity breaks down. According to the artist, her sculptures are 'vehicles for gathering sociological dust' which refuse the viewer the satisfaction of a resolving punch line.

Bluebutter Idles, 2014

Welded power coated steel, stitched fabric, french polished cherry wood, Valchromat, airbrushed steel, hand embroidered fabric, cast bronze, wicker, cast plaster, woven straw, leather, fired clay, shell, butter and rubber petal

140 × 120 × 83 cm

Purchased with the assistance of the Art Fund



Image courtesy of Sadie Coles, London

Rosalind Nashashibi

This Quality is a film shot in downtown Cairo. It comprises two halves: the first shows a 30-something woman looking directly at the camera, and sometimes acknowledging the existence of others around her who we cannot see. She has a beautiful face with eyes which seem to see internally rather than outwardly, they almost have the appearance of being painted on, suggesting the blindness of a mythological seer. The second half shows a series of parked cars covered with fabric. Each car suggests a sightless face, as the fabric stretched around the machine turns it into a face but also seems to hood the car so that it is conspicuously hidden, like a child covering his eyes.

Image and text courtesy of the artist and Murray Guy, New York



This Quality, 2010
16mm film
5 minutes
Edition 1 of 3

John Newling

John Newling often makes use of horticultural processes in his work. In 2006 Newling grew a pathway of Pinot Noir grapes in the aisle of St John's Church, Chatham, for a work entitled *Chatham Vines*. To make *Value; Coin, Note and Eclipse* the artist grew more than 80 pots of Jersey Kale (Brassica Oleracea) in his Nottingham garden – a plant often referred to as 'Walking Stick Cabbage' thanks to its stalks that can be used as walking sticks once its leaves and roots are removed.

Newling harvested the leaves of these plants at different stages of their growth, cutting and drying them to use as materials. Applying gold leaf to their surface, and transforming them into a kind of currency, he also used these leaves to create replicas of £20 notes, and the pattern of an eclipse. The result is a series of two-dimensional works exploring time, currency and value.



Value; Coin, Note and Eclipse, 2011–2012
Pressed and gilded Jersey Kale plants
27 framed works, each 78 × 60 cm

Uriel Orlow

Uriel Orlow's contemplative films focus on traumatic historical events that have been overlooked or forgotten. Fusing documentary filmmaking with unexpected fictional interventions, his works are meditations on the ways in which history and memory are constructed in the present.

The subjects of *Remnants of the Future* and *Plans for the Past* are two towns near the border of Europe and Asia that share the same name – Mush. The town in *Remnants of the Future* is the site of a large-scale housing project initiated in 1988 after a major earthquake in Northern Armenia left thousands of people without homes, left abandoned and incomplete after the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991.

Plans for the Past focuses on the town that gave the ambitious housing project its name. Now a part of modern-day Turkey, this town was the site of horrific massacres during the Armenian genocide of 1915. Nearly 100 years after the event, Orlow's camera shows us that the town's domestic and public buildings still bear the scars.



Remnants of the Future / Plans for the Past (Diptych), 2010–2012
Two channel HD video (Cinemascope format 1:2.55), 4 channel sound
18 minutes
Edition 2 of 3 + 2AP

Joe Fletcher Orr

Joe Fletcher Orr's *Orranorco* emerged from a boast made by the artist's father that he could make a rug better than any they sold on the family's rug stall. The resulting artwork, which Orr sees as a collaboration with his father, shares its name with the stall, 'Orr and Orr co'. This name, provided by Orr's grandfather, is a play on 'Morocco' – the place from which the stall bought its rugs.

Orr's sculptures, performances and installations use humour to undermine the 'seriousness' of the art world, and the authority of the art object. Orr traces his willingness to poke fun at his own work and contemporary art to visits he made with his father to art galleries as a young boy, when he would be encouraged to laugh at many of the works on display.



Photo: Laurence Lane

Orranorco, 2014
Wool
120 × 170cm

Alex Pain

Alex Pain's *Tor* was made for the artist's solo exhibition at Nottingham Castle in 2012. Pain's work is influenced by minimalist sculpture and modernist architecture. The architectural reference for *Tor* was the design of the Nottingham Castle's Ducal Palace, built by the first duke of Newcastle in 1663. Although they are often inspired by existing buildings, Pain's sculptures are never simple replicas: his original source goes through a stage of considerable 'distortion and distillation' before becoming part of a sculpture.

The materials that Pain works with – including foam, wood, copper, glass and gold leaf – reference both the 'visible' and 'invisible' elements of a building, from the materials used for cladding and insulation to those used for embellishment and decoration. Pain hopes that his sculptures draw attention to the properties of different materials, and encourage his viewers to carry out further 'material interrogations'.



Tor, 2012
Foam, copper and chemicals
240 × 46 × 46 cm

Carl Plackman

Carl Plackman's sculptures take the form of careful assemblages of found and fabricated objects. According to Plackman, these detailed constructions 'attempt to examine how people communicate with each other and how objects often get in the way'. Growing out of his interest in literature, cinema and the origins of language, they reward careful looking.



Without Belief There are Only Replicas, 1987
Wood, string, paper, gouache and mixed media
222 × 117 cm
Gift of the artist's estate 2014



Plackman worked as an architectural assistant before training in sculpture. This architectural grounding is evident in both his drawings and his sculptural work. Each of the components of *Without Belief There are Only Replicas* and *Orpheus* – including a domestic full-length mirror, and a large pendulum – exist in finely balanced spatial, visual and metaphorical relationships with one another. To Plackman, objects were never simply 'neutral'. Rather, they were 'crystallisations of numerous value systems and judgements... part of our own mythology as well as that of the past'.

Orpheus, 1985
Wood, mirror, seeds and metal
182.9 × 67 cm
Gift of the artist's estate 2014

Yelena Popova

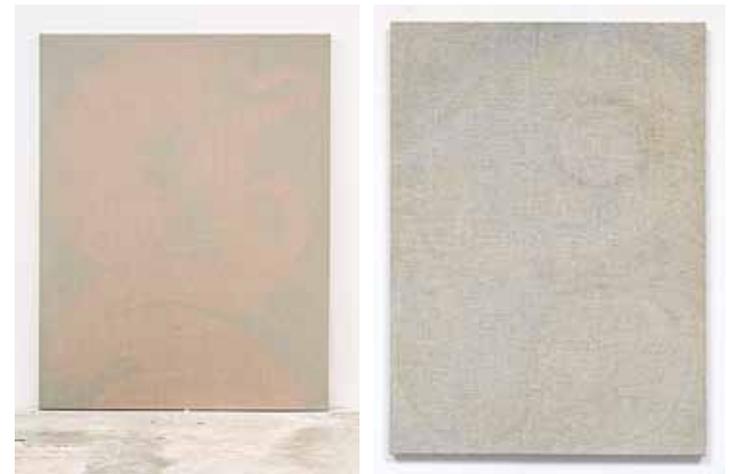
To the artist Yelena Popova invisibility is both a potent political issue and a formal device capable of capturing the attention of an audience exhausted by an image-saturated culture. Popova refers to the paintings in her 'Evaporating' series as 'transparent images' which 'recede into the raw fabric'. These paintings – although they appear to look back at twentieth-century movements such as futurism and constructivism – are influenced by digital culture. Popova explains that 'the disembodiment of screen-based images' and certain touch-screen gestures is echoed in her painterly technique.

Unnamed is Popova's first film, made during her MA at the Royal College of Art. The film is a personal account of the history of the artist's hometown in Russia. Through a combination of personal and archival footage Popova relates the story of Ozyorsk, a 'secret' town built to house the workers of a plutonium plant that helped to create the Soviet Union's first atomic bomb. Popova's film relates how, in 1957, the plant was the site of a major disaster, responsible for releasing more radioactive material than Chernobyl.

Unnamed, 2011
DV Video: colour, sound
17 minutes
Edition 3 of 5

'Untitled' from the 'Evaporating' series, 2014
Distemper or glue tempera on linen
210 × 160cm

Untitled, 2014
Distemper or glue tempera on linen
92 × 66cm



Lis Rhodes

Lis Rhodes is a filmmaker and founding member of the women's film and video distribution company Circles, established in 1979. Many of her films employ a primarily abstract language. Her first film, *Dresden Dynamo*, made when she was still a student at the North East London Polytechnic, explores the relationship between image and sound. To make *Dresden Dynamo* Rhodes applied a set of stickers to a 16mm film, which produced a range of curious sounds when the film was played. Of this film, Rhodes has said: 'It was an attempt to make a material connection between what is seen and what is heard. The image is the sound.'

Rhodes's later film, *Light Reading*, begins in darkness. A woman's voice reads extracts of text by the American Modernist writer Gertrude Stein. When the voice stops, a loose narrative takes shape from a series of collaged photographs, including one of a bloodstained bed. In this film, as in her others, Rhodes explores the power relationships present in both 'the grammar of looking and the grammar of language'.

Dresden Dynamo, 1971–72

16mm film

5 minutes

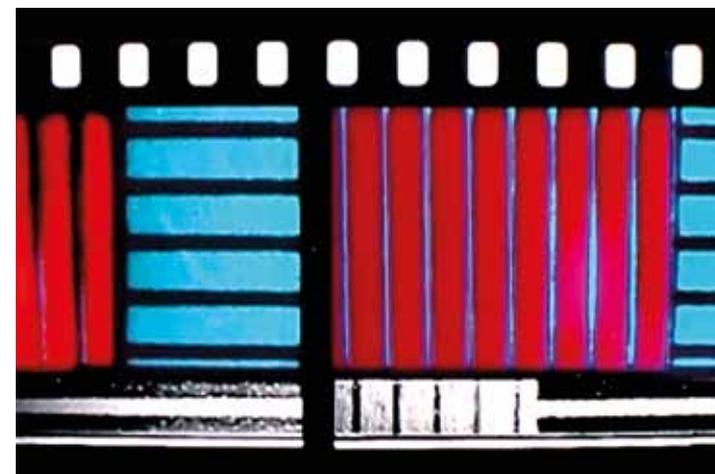
Edition 1 of 5

Light Reading, 1978

Single screen, 16mm/ HD video

20 minutes

Edition 2 of 5



Paul Rooney

In his text, sound and video works Paul Rooney creates poetic narratives built around the 'voices' of semi-fictional personas. These 'voices' are not single entities, but rather a collection of many different voices both fictional and 'real'. Slipping easily between documentary and fiction, Rooney's work draws attention to its hybrid state, and emphasises formal artifice for comedic effect.

In Rooney's *Flat 23* a former resident of a soon to be demolished block of flats lists the objects that used to populate her apartment. These words are set to music and sung in a two-part harmony. Through these disorientating layers of voices it is just possible to catch certain words and phrases.

The two-screen video work *Small Talk* meditates on failure, repetition and lost opportunities. While one of the screens shows a remote petrol station filmed by the artist in 2001, the other shows the same petrol station filmed nine years later. Although they have no sound, both films have subtitles that conduct a wry conversation with one another. As in many of Rooney's films, the tone of *Small Talk* is pitched somewhere between comedy and melancholy.

Flat 23, 2002

Sound work for three monitors, three channel sound

10 minutes

Edition 1 of 3

Small Talk, 2010

Two screen video with stereo sound

8 minutes

Edition 1 of 3



Imogen Stidworthy

Filmed in two Liverpool pubs, Imogen Stidworthy's *Barrabacksarrabang* features individuals speaking in a local form of backslang. Traditionally, blackslang – which consists of the insertion of extra vowels and syllables into ordinary speech – was used to obscure discussion about illegal activity. As Stidworthy comments, this language repels and alienates all but those 'in the know'.

Stidworthy's complex videos, sound works and installations treat the voice as a sculptural material, and explore the points at which language and other forms of communication collapse and become meaningless. She states: 'I think one of the ongoing conditions of language in many of my works is that there is a very ambiguous, very unstable status in terms of the idea that it can carry meaning, or the kinds of meaning that it does carry.'

Barrabacksarrabang, 2009–10

"Single screen video, 9'15", HD video 1920 × 1080, Blu-ray or digital file, colour, stereo, English and Backslang spoken. With transcript printed in A5 folder, or as Letraset applied directly to wall of adjoining space

9 minutes 13 seconds

Edition 1 of 5 + 2AP

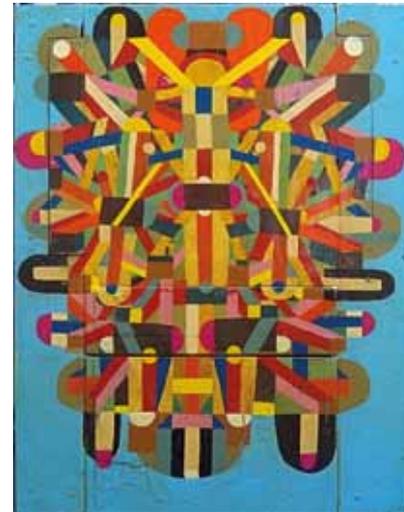


Image courtesy of the artist, Matt's Gallery, London and Galerie Akinci, Amsterdam

Jason Thompson

Jason Thompson's paintings are influenced by mechanical, botanic and anatomical diagrams. Each of his works begins as a series of improvised marks, which are then 'repeated, copied and overlaid' to form part of a larger complex pattern. Thompson avoids planning his paintings. Rather, he prefers them to emerge from an organic process of trial and error – a way of working that the artist feels is analogous to natural evolutionary processes.

Thompson intends for his paintings to feel 'personal, intimate and hopefully familiar'. The scale of the works, the intensity of their colours and their highly-polished finish, gives them the appearance of small, sacred icons.



Mirror Mask Cloud, 2015
Enamel paint and varnish on wood
36 × 39.5 cm

After the Life Mask of William Blake, 2015
Enamel paint and varnish on wood
40 × 60 cm

Sonora A.C., 2014
Enamel paint and varnish on wood
50 × 73 cm

Barbara Walker

Barbara Walker produces expressive paintings illustrating social interactions in public spaces, from churches and dancehalls to barbershops. Walker considers her work to be social documentary and in her paintings consciously aims to challenge what she sees as the misunderstandings and stereotypes that abound about the African-Caribbean community in Britain, offering instead a positive alternative vision through her paintings.

Boundary II is taken from the series *Private Face* which focused on the African-Caribbean community of Birmingham. This painting draws on the tradition of nineteenth-century realism and takes inspiration from its depiction of the labouring classes of the day. Walker's subject is a barbershop, a familiar sight in the area of Handsworth in Birmingham where she grew up. Using a limited palette of muted colours, *Boundary II* reveals an intimate scene between a barber and client, conveying a sense of mutual respect, trust and affection between the two subjects. In doing so, the artist seeks to dispel the negative portrayal of black males which dominate the media.



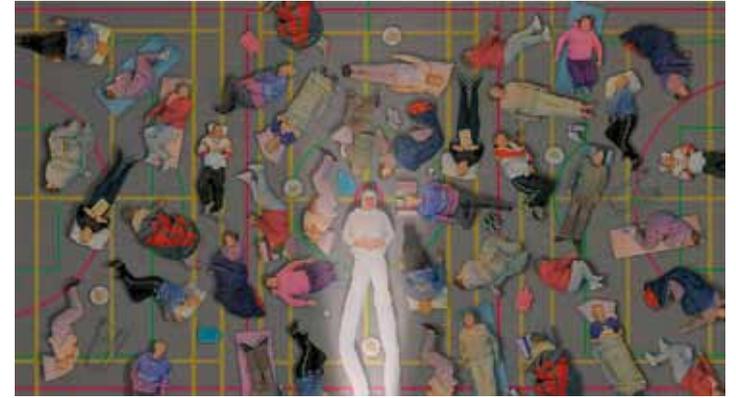
Boundary II, 2000
Oil on canvas
121 × 182 cm
Gift of the artist 2014

Bedwyr Williams

Bedwyr Williams's *ECHT*, created as part of a major commission for Tramway, Glasgow, depicts a dystopian future where an apocalyptic event has caused society as we know it to crumble, and a new world order to form. As Williams explains, 'status is based on conspicuous consumption' and 'hoarders are kings'. During the film Williams's character narrates with a deadpan delivery Britain's rapid descent into this new feudal system.

Williams, who represented Wales at the Venice Biennale in 2013, has a history of stand up comedy. The humour in this particular work comes from the fact that the increasingly absurd events take place within banal suburban settings, as well as from the juxtaposition of the 'dark' subject matter with the film's determinedly pastel palette.

ECHT, 2014
HD Single Channel Video
15minutes 56seconds
Edition 1 of 3 + 2 AP



Jesse Wine

Jesse Wine, a sculptor who works primarily with ceramics, found his medium almost by accident during a period of study spent in the US. Wine describes his recent sculptural work as a 'celebration' of his chosen medium. The artist enjoys the tactility and expressiveness of clay, as well as the ways in which the works can be shaped by 'mistakes' and surprises during the making process.

Many of Wine's sculptures are autobiographical, dealing with moments or objects that make up the artist's daily life. Wine refers to this way of working as 'part expression, part therapy'. His work *I really care V* is a reproduction of one of his recent meals.



I really care V, 2014
Glazed ceramic
7 × 53 × 56 cm

I don't normally SMS women, 2012
Glazed ceramic
49 × 39 × 19 cm



In contrast, *I don't normally SMS women* is an abstract work made during a period in which the artist was teaching himself about the process of firing, glazing and finishing ceramic works. To Wine this work is a 'hybrid' that reflects both his newly discovered way of working, as well the influence of the American ceramicist Ken Price. The title of this work, like many of Wine's titles, comes from a fragment of overheard conversation.

